

NSC BRIEFING

6 April 1955

BACKGROUND - FIRST PURGE IN CHINA

- I. The 4 April announcement of the fall of Politburo member Kao Kang (a "suicide") and party organization chief Jao Shu-shih (presumably jailed) is official confirmation of the first major purge of the Chinese Communist Party leadership since the Peiping regime was founded in 1949 (indeed, the first since 1938).
  - A. The announcement comes as no surprise. Both men have been conspicuous by their absence from the news since early 1954--the only two Chinese Communist leaders at the very top level to be so ignored.
  - B. Seven lesser figures were purged with Kao and Jao. Six of them had been Kao's subordinates in Manchuria.
  - C. Despite press speculation, there is nothing to indicate that either Kao or Jao came to grief as a result of bonds with deposed Soviet leaders or disagreements with present ones.
- II. The purge of the two men climaxes a Chinese Communist "unity" drive, explicitly aimed at the party leadership, which began more than a year ago (February 1954).

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- A. At that time Liu Shao-chi, Mao Tse-tung's top deputy, denounced efforts by unnamed party leaders to carve out "independent kingdoms."
  - B. This charge apparently referred to efforts by regional bosses to resist Peiping's central authority, as well as efforts by bigwigs in the Peiping government to build up personal followings.
  - C. The 4 April communiqué specifically accuses Kao and Jao of establishing an "anti-party alliance" for these purposes.
- III. Both Kao and Jao have had good chances to commit such "crimes."
- A. Kao had been the party's boss in Manchuria, holding all of that vital area's top jobs simultaneously. Jao had been party boss in prosperous, urbanized East China.
  - B. After moving to Peiping two years ago, Kao was chairman of the powerful State Planning Committee, while Jao had been the party's director of personnel for all of China.
  - C. The two may also have resisted central authority in other ways besides building "kingdoms."

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1. Jao is accused of adopting a "rightist" policy in East China, which suggests a basic policy disagreement over the speed of socialization.
  2. Kao, as chief planner, may well have differed with other leaders on economic policies.
- IV. As for their fates, the communiqué contains a sort of Marxist epitaph for Kao--he "committed suicide as an expression of his ultimate betrayal of the party."
- A. Peiping says of Jao--evidently in jail--he "has never shown any signs of repentance and persists in an attitude of attacking the party."
  - B. With unconscious irony, the communiqué summarizes the consequences of the purge: the party "has never before had such unity and solidarity."